


Braille Monitor



FEBRUARY, 1977

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

FEBRUARY 1977

A PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION
SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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DONALD McCONNELL, *Editor*

NEWS ITEMS AND ADDRESS CHANGES
SHOULD BE SENT TO:

THE BRAILLE MONITOR
218 RANDOLPH HOTEL BUILDING
FOURTH & COURT STREETS
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309

* * *

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
BOX 11185
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66111

* * *

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CONTENTS

A CALL TO ACTION: THE MAIL CAMPAIGNS STOP	45
BY DON MCCONNELL	
OPEN LETTER TO FEDERATIONISTS: THE FUTURE OF THE MOVEMENT ...	47
BY KENNETH JERNIGAN	
CONVENTION BULLETIN	49
BY STEVEN HENRY	
NFB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETS	50
BY JONATHAN MAY	
"TWO FOR ONE" POLICY BRINGS INEVITABLE RESULTS- AIRLINES DISCRIMINATE	54
BY KENNETH JERNIGAN	
IDAHO ATTORNEY GENERAL WRITES TO UNITED AIRLINES	59
FEDERATION BECOMES MEMBER OF BRAILLE AUTHORITY OF NORTH AMERICA	60
BY KENNETH JERNIGAN	
1977 RICKARD SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION OPENS	64
BY HOWARD E. MAY	
ANOTHER VICTORY: BLIND BUSINESSMEN WILL RECEIVE FREE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE	65
FEDERATIONIST APPOINTED DISTRICT COURT JUDGE IN MAINE	67
BY STEVEN P. ROSENFELD	
CHICAGO POSTSCRIPT	68
"I MADE IT ON MY OWN, OR DID I?"	72
BY JAMES OMVIG	
NEVADA CONVENTION	76
BY JOHN TAIT	
CONNECTICUT CONVENTION	77
BY HOWARD E. MAY	
RECIPES OF THE MONTH	78
SUBMITTED BY SHARON OMVIG	
MONITOR MINIATURES	79

A CALL TO ACTION: THE MAIL CAMPAIGNS STOP

BY

DON MCCONNELL

Since the 1950's almost all of our funding has come from mailings of merchandise—neckties and greeting cards. There have been problems with this method of fundraising—it has never been popular with local merchants and Better Business Bureaus—but it has allowed us to carry out our programs. And those programs have changed for all time what it means to be blind.

At the time of this writing it is a virtual certainty that we have made our last mailing. The last few years have seen the passage by many states and even some cities of strict new laws governing fundraising. The laws require any organization mailing into a local area to register with the local government. The highly selective and discriminatory way these laws are applied and the complexity of the registering requirements means that, in effect, it will be impossible to carry on this form of fundraising. In addition, some of our opponents have realized that these laws can be used to generate lawsuits and administrative proceedings against us that will destroy our ability to operate, no matter what the eventual legal outcome. We now face such a suit in Pennsylvania, with one apparently commencing in another state, and others likely around the country. The most recent of these suits not only asks that we no longer do fundraising in the state and that we fill out all kinds of detailed registration forms (entailing costly and involved accounting procedures) but also goes so far as to try to throw out our duly elected officers and executive committee people. There is no question about the political origin of these lawsuits, but neither

is there any question that they pose the greatest threat to the existence of the Federation that we have had yet. The ending of the mailings of ties and cards means that most of our income stops almost immediately.

Think for a minute what this means. It means that unless we can generate nearly half a million dollars per year from within our own membership, and begin doing this now, we will have to wind down the Federation. The *Monitor* will stop publication, or perhaps be published quarterly; the expensive Braille edition will almost certainly be abolished. We will institute no more costly lawsuits; we would even have difficulty defending ourselves against suits brought against us—making us fair game for our enemies. The Washington Office would close, and with it would go our ability to monitor legislation setting up programs which can control our lives. Leadership seminars, our National Blindness Information Center, the ready availability of NFB literature and public relations materials, the presidential cassette releases—all these would be things of the past.

There is no question that financing has become the highest Federation priority. We simply must begin, and at once, to find new income.

Where will this new income come from? It could come from foundation grants, from wealthy friends of members, from wills or bequests, or eventually from our endowment. But where it can and really

must come is from ourselves. For when it comes right down to it, we are the ones who have a stake in keeping our movement alive. We can argue our needs to friends or foundation boards, but this fight is not theirs. No one will ever have the intensity of interest that we have in this struggle. Let our ability to be independent as blind persons spill over from our lives to our movement.

In other words, let's sign up for the Pre-Authorized Check (PAC) Plan. There are something over three hundred Federationists signed up now and they supply almost ten percent of our total income. We need three thousand PAC Plan members instead of three hundred. Some people are giving more than \$100 per month to the PAC Plan, and quite a sizeable number are giving more than \$50. Several of these are now in the process of increasing their amounts. The average monthly contribution from each PAC Plan member has been about fifteen dollars. And yet if every Federationist donated even five or ten dollars a month we would be well out of the woods. It should be clear from this that we can make up in numbers and dedication what we lack in wealth.

In the past, *Monitor* readers have been spared any very strong fundraising appeals. Not any longer. Unless we respond, quickly and generously, there will be no appeals because there will be no *Monitor*. We simply can not and will not fade into history because our enemies found a way to cut off our funding and because we lacked the guts and belief and dedication to respond. Our momentum is gaining every day. The time is now, and the fate of the movement rests

with the blind of the Nation. This very article will cause our enemies to rejoice, but let them think again. We have emerged from every past challenge stronger for the contest.

The Pre-Authorized Check (PAC) Plan

The PAC Plan is a way for you to contribute a set amount each month to the NFB without the trouble of writing and mailing a check. The amount you pledge will be drawn from your account automatically. We are enclosing two PAC Plan cards with this issue (each card has two parts). To join the plan:

(1) On the upper portion of the PAC Plan card, fill in the amount you can send each month, and fill in the day of the month you want the money to be drawn from your account.

(2) Put your signature and the date on *both the upper and lower portions* of the PAC Plan card where there is an "X." All other spaces on the card can be filled in by the NFB Treasurer.

(3) Write "void" on one of your own unused checks and attach it to the PAC Plan card. Mail the card (both parts) with the voided check to: Richard Edlund, Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind, Box 11185, Kansas City, Kansas 66111.

Your bank will send you receipts for your contributions with your regular bank statements. You can increase (or decrease) your monthly payments by filling out a new PAC Plan card and mailing it to the Treasurer. Also, more PAC Plan cards are available from the Treasurer. □

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN**

For my benefit and convenience, I hereby request and authorize the National Federation of the Blind to draw a check in the amount of \$_____ on the _____ day of each month payable to its own order. This authorization will remain in effect until revoked by me in writing and until such notice is actually received.

Please include a **voided check** with your PAC card. The PAC card must be signed in two places, where the **X's** are. Please enclose the voided check along with your PAC card and mail to: **Richard Edlund, Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind, Box 11185, Kansas City, Kansas 66111.**

X

Bank signature of donor (both signatures if two are necessary)

Address

**AUTHORIZATION TO HONOR CHECKS DRAWN BY
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND**

We understand that your bank has agreed to cooperate in our Pre-Authorized Check Plan on behalf of your depositor. Attached is your client's signed authorization to honor such checks drawn by us.

Customer's account and your bank transit numbers will be MICR printed on checks, per usual specifications, before they are deposited.

Our Indemnification Agreement is on the reverse side of the signed authorization.

Name of depositor
as shown on Bank
records

Acct. #

Name of Bank and Branch Name, if any,
and address of bank or branch where
account is maintained

For my benefit and convenience, I hereby request and authorize you to pay and charge to my account checks drawn on my account by the National Federation of the Blind to its own order. This authorization will remain in effect until revoked by me in writing and until you actually receive such notice I agree that you shall be fully protected in honoring any such check.

In consideration of your compliance with such request and authorization, I agree that your treatment of each check, and your rights in respect to it shall be the same as if it were signed personally by me and that if any such check be dishonored, whether with or without cause, you shall be under no liability whatsoever.

The National Federation of the Blind is instructed to forward this authorization to you.

X

Date

Bank signature of customer (both signatures if two are necessary)

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN**

For my benefit and convenience, I hereby request and authorize the National Federation of the Blind to draw a check in the amount of \$_____ on the _____ day of each month payable to its own order. This authorization will remain in effect until revoked by me in writing and until such notice is actually received.

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The National Federation of the Blind is instructed to forward this authorization to you.

X

Date

Bank signature of customer (both signatures if two are necessary)

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN
(back of PAC card)

INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

TO: Bank named on the reverse side

In consideration of your compliance with the request and authorization of the depositor named on the reverse side.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

1. It will refund to you any amount erroneously paid by you to The National Federation of the Blind on any such check if claim for the amount of such erroneous payment is made by you within twelve months from the date of the check on which such erroneous payment was made.

Authorized in a resolution adopted by the Board Members
of the National Federation of the Blind on November 28, 1974.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

BY: _____
Treasurer

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
PRE-AUTHORIZED CHECK PLAN
(back of PAC card)

INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

TO: Bank named on the reverse side

In consideration of your compliance with the request and authorization of the depositor named on the reverse side.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

1. It will refund to you any amount erroneously paid by you to The National Federation of the Blind on any such check if claim for the amount of such erroneous payment is made by you within twelve months from the date of the check on which such erroneous payment was made.

Authorized in a resolution adopted by the Board Members
of the National Federation of the Blind on November 28, 1974.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND

BY: _____
Treasurer

OPEN LETTER TO FEDERATIONISTS: THE FUTURE OF THE MOVEMENT

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

For several years I have been saying to you that our mail fundraising campaigns were in danger of coming to an end. As reported in the first article of this issue, that time has now come. Our reaction to this emergency will not only determine our future as a movement but it will also have direct and lasting effects upon every blind person in the nation, including the children of the next generation.

Because we have dared to speak out for our rights as blind people, our opponents have done everything they could to destroy us. The effectiveness of our actions can be seen in the bitterness and desperate nature of the all-out war now being waged against us. The war has been dirty and unprincipled.

There have been attempts to break into our offices and steal from our files. There have been repeated efforts to destroy me as a person—to ruin my career, to damage my reputation, to harass me with lawsuits, and to slander and libel. There have been similar attacks upon the other leaders of the movement throughout the country. There have been pressures on rank-and-file members—intimidations, scare tactics, and promises of reward for defection. All of this has failed to stop us. It has simply made us stronger.

Now, our mail fundraising campaign is gone, and we are squarely faced with the challenge. We will either meet it successfully and immediately, or we will go under as a movement. It is that simple and that direct. There can be no in-between. The only

vulnerability we had—the only way our opponents had any hope of attacking us—was through our fundraising. They have now made their move and done their worst. If we can find the determination to finance ourselves from within our own ranks, there is no vulnerability left, and no way to attack us. All of our past accomplishments will be but a beginning. Let our opponents throw in the towel.

If we cannot meet the challenge, then our movement fades out and ceases to be of any real significance. Even if it continues to exist as a name and a memory, its importance in the lives of the blind is at an end. How the leadership of the Federation behaves and what it decides will be important, but not nearly so important as your actions and decisions. We must do this thing together (with vigor, with dedication, with spirit, and with our money), or we cannot do it at all.

Our PAC Plan contributions are now running at about \$60,000 per year. Donations from members and their families and friends are close to \$40,000 per year. Our mail campaigns have been netting us in the neighborhood of \$600,000 per year. This is a lot of money—especially if only a few of us try to make it up; but it is not very much if the blind and their friends respond by the thousands. I will immediately do everything that I can to find new sources of income and to cut expenditures. Cuts will not be easy, and they will not be pleasant; but they must be made.

I am writing a special letter to the Braille readers of the *Monitor* to ask that as many as possible shift to talking book. It costs three or four times as much to send the magazine in Braille as on record. We will try to continue to make the Braille issue available to deaf-blind readers and to others who have a justifiable reason for wanting it (in the circumstances mere personal preference for Braille will not be enough).

We will skip the April issue of the *Monitor* entirely. This will save money, and it will give us time to see what response we get. Whether we will have to begin publishing the *Monitor* on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis will be a matter for future determination. New lawsuits, operation of our offices, production and distribution of educational material and public service spots, the making of new films, attendance at state conventions by national representatives, the presidential releases—these and all of our other activities must be examined and assigned priorities. We will do as much or as little as we have the means to do. Unless I have misjudged the caliber of the blind of this country, our cutbacks will be short-lived, and in less than a year we will be better financed and more vigorously on the move than ever before in our history.

The situation is grave, but let me make it clear that I do not approach it with gloom

or discouragement. Far from it. We need every man and woman and child we can get to come up to the line and join in the fight; but the army we need must be an army of volunteers, not draftees. We want no person in this fight in body only; he must bring his heart with him, or stay at home.

What I said to the Federation in 1971 (to the blind, and to our sighted brothers and sisters who have made our cause their cause) is, if anything, even more appropriate today:

"We are not helpless, and we are not children. We know our problems, and we know how to solve them. The challenge which faces us is clear, and the means of meeting that challenge are equally clear. If we fail in courage or nerve or dedication, we have only ourselves to blame.

"But, of course, we will not fail. The stakes are too high and the need too great to permit it. To paraphrase the Biblical statement: Upon the rock of Federationism we have built our movement, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it! Since 1969 we have talked a great deal about joining each other on the barricades. If there was ever a time, that time is now."

Come! Join me on the barricades, and we will teach our opponents a lesson and build a better world for the blind. □

CONVENTION BULLETIN

BY

STEVEN HENRY

Well, it is that time of year again. It is time to start thinking about the 1977 Convention which will be held in New Orleans and hosted by the NFB of Louisiana.

During the past several years, Federation Conventions have been growing by leaps and bounds and next year should prove to be no exception. To prove this point, it will be necessary to use three hotels to accommodate everyone who is attending the Convention. The Braniff Place Hotel, located at 1500 Canal Street, will serve as headquarters for all Convention activities. The two other hotels which will be used are the Delta Towers and the Governor House. Both of these hotels are located approximately two blocks from the Braniff Place, which will make them accessible to those who wish to walk. Also, it is probable that a shuttle bus will be running every day during the Convention to assist Convention-goers who need transportation to and from the Braniff.

The meeting of the Executive Committee will be held Monday, July 4; and the first business session of the Convention will commence Tuesday, July 5. Adjournment is scheduled for 5:00 p.m., Friday, July 8.

Conventions rates are again excellent: singles, \$10; doubles \$14.50. Reservations

should be sent to the Braniff Place Hotel, 1500 Canal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70140. The Braniff Place is taking all the reservations for the NFB Convention, no matter which hotel you will actually stay in. The Braniff Place requires that a deposit of \$10 accompany your request for a room. (The December 1976 *Monitor* discusses this procedure in greater detail.)

Also, let us not forget door prizes. We hope to receive door prizes from every state and local affiliate. The Greater New Orleans Chapter plans to donate a unique prize which will interest everyone. All door prizes should be worth at least twenty-five dollars and should be sent to Mrs. Velma James, 3655 Beech Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70805.

Before closing, there are two points which I believe are noteworthy. First, the three hotels mentioned above are centrally located, within close proximity of many of the attractions of the city. Second, the NFB of Louisiana is planning to charter the steamboat *Natchez* for a Wednesday afternoon cruise on the mighty Mississippi.

Again, I want to urge everyone to come to New Orleans and make this the biggest Convention ever. □

NFB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETS

BY

JONATHAN MAY

Following long-standing custom, the NFB National Executive Committee met at our Des Moines headquarters over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, November 25-28, 1976. Most Executive Committee members arrived with their spouses Wednesday afternoon and shared in a bountiful Thanksgiving dinner hosted by Anna Katherine and Kenneth Jernigan on Thursday. The only sad note in the otherwise joyous situation was the absence of Perry Sundquist, who has been a happy participant for many years in these Thanksgiving meetings and who, because of poor health, was unable to be present.

The Subcommittee on Budget and Finance met during most of Friday morning, and the full Executive Committee met in almost continuous sessions from noon to 9:00 p.m. Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Saturday, and from 8:15 to 11:00 a.m. Sunday. A wide variety of problems confronting the organized blind and the progress of the movement were exhaustively discussed.

NFB finances took up much of Friday afternoon's discussion. Priorities for commitment of our decreasing financial resources were carefully weighted and a spartan budget for the 1977 calendar year was unanimously adopted. The most critical problem faced by the NFB is the shortage of revenue to support our programs. Federation income has decreased partly because of hard economic times but largely due to the increasing number of states which have enacted severely restrictive mail solicitation laws; laws which are selectively enforced to the disadvantage of the organized blind.

The White Cane Fund Committee was discussed and executive committeeman Robert Eschbach was appointed by the President as new chairman. The status of our NFB candy sales program was also considered; new price agreements will be made with the Ludwig Candy Company to bring additional funds to national and state treasuries. The long-term hope for funding our movement will be self-financing by our membership through the NFB PAC Plan. Efforts will have to be increased at the local level to send out the Edlund letters and solicit bequests to the NFB through greater contact with attorneys and bank trust officers. As authorized by our 1976 National Convention, the NFB dissolved Fedco, and our mail merchandise campaigns will be wound down.

The closing of the NFB Berkeley Office was discussed. With the retirement of both Perry Sundquist as editor of the *Braille Monitor* and Mrs. Hazel tenBroek as associate editor, publication of the *Monitor* will be moved to the Des Moines Office. Mr. Sundquist's and Mrs. tenBroek's invaluable counsel and assistance will still be given to our President. The Executive Committee thoroughly discussed the status of the *Braille Monitor*. While we hope to find a way to cut costs with the transfer of the *Monitor* publication to Des Moines, the *Monitor* will still absorb a considerable portion of our NFB budget. It costs our organization an average of fifteen dollars for an annual subscription to the *Monitor* for each person on the mailing list. Since, on the average, the Braille edition costs more than

twice as much per reader as either inkprint or record, the NFB President and the Executive Committee agreed that all but the deaf-blind readers of the Braille edition of the *Monitor* would greatly help our movement by switching to the less expensive talking book or ink versions, and should be urged, in the strongest possible terms, to do so. In this way, Federationists will continue to be informed, and more funds will be made available for our other programs. Mr. Don McConnell has moved from the Berkeley Office to the NFB Des Moines headquarters to assume editorship of the *Braille Monitor* and to assist President Jernigan with the increasing work load.

The relationship between the NFB and the Clovernook Printing House for the Blind was considered. Clovernook was accredited recently by NAC and has continued its disgraceful custodial treatment of blind workers. The Executive Committee unanimously agreed that the NFB and all its state affiliates should cease doing business with Clovernook until Clovernook disaccredits from NAC and otherwise reforms its attitudes and treatment of the blind. The timing and implementation of the policy were left to the discretion of the President.

The Executive Committee discussed with great concern the ever-increasing work load of our NFB President. Our indefatigable President Jernigan indicated he has cut back some of his working hours. The committee felt the addition of Don McConnell to the Des Moines staff will be of great help. Federationists are urged to keep sending reports of local and state activities and problems to our President but if a reply is not necessary, to please so indicate on all correspondence. The President expressed the hope that more of the work load would be assumed by Executive Committee members, as well as

by state and local leaders. Federationists are urged to ask local and state leaders for answers to routine questions and to ask national Executive Committee members for help where at all possible. President Jernigan will refer many requests back to the committee person best qualified to answer the question.

The twice-yearly NFB national leadership seminars held by President Jernigan in Des Moines have had a great impact in cementing the unity of our movement and distributing the Federation work load. The Executive Committee agreed that the seminars should continue. Appointments to NFB national committees were also discussed and recommendations given to the President.

Mobilization of our movement on critical national problems should not cause Federationists to slacken their efforts in behalf of ongoing grass-roots NFB programs. Every Federationist can help reduce the presidential work load by distributing our NFB literature. Distribution of our TV and radio spot announcements has more impact when each local chapter public relations committee makes personal contacts with TV and radio stations, gets NFB philosophy aired, and follows up with letters of appreciation. State, local, and university libraries should be encouraged to purchase a reference copy of the bound *Braille Monitors* and the NFB films, "The Blind: An Emerging Minority" and "The Blind Guys." Films recording the 1974, 1975, and 1976 NFB Convention banquet addresses are available for loan or purchase from our National Office.

The Executive Committee spent considerable time discussing the ongoing NFB struggle to reform NAC. The nationally televised NFB New York demonstration

against the American Foundation for the Blind and the NAC annual board meeting November 17-18 was reviewed. James Gashel, NFB's official observer at the NAC meeting, reported the meeting was a hollow formality, all real control having been turned over to the NAC staff and NAC executive committee thus allowing NAC to continue to operate in secret while holding itself out to the blind and the public as open and democratic. NAC's failure to gain support of most agencies for the blind was again evidenced by the report that NAC had added only five agencies to its accredited list.

The deteriorating situation in the NAC-accredited Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind and the successful demonstration November 19 against Lighthouse reprisals have been reported in the December and January *Monitors*. President Jernigan and the Executive Committee unanimously agreed to assist financially Federationists who suffered reprisals for exercising their right to organize sheltered workshops. Plans were made to redouble our efforts to unionize the Chicago Lighthouse.

The National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) election (see the December *Monitor*) was discussed, and it was hoped NCSAB would put the NAC controversy behind it and get on with the business of serving the blind. President Jernigan reiterated that with the swelling ranks of blind persons and agencies who reject NAC's attempt to control their lives, Federation leaders can expect intense attacks of a personal and abusive nature by the AFB-NAC combine and their increasingly desperate reactionary adherents. Plans were made to demonstrate at all future NAC executive committee meetings (assuming, that is, we can track them down in the

secret sessions) and to redouble NFB efforts to persuade existing NAC-approved agencies to disaccredit.

The progress of the Kurzweil reading machine program was discussed. The NFB has secured considerable funds for development and field-testing of the Kurzweil machine, which converts print to spoken English. Field-testing of the machine should commence at the first of four sites in early 1977, under the direction of NFB Research and Evaluation Committee chairman Mike Hingson.

The Federation has become a member of the National Braille Authority, the organization which sets the rules for the Braille code in the English-speaking world. (See article elsewhere in this issue.) Since the blind themselves are the persons who use Braille, the Executive Committee expressed strong feeling that organized blind consumers should play a role in this standard-setting body.

Progress in the election of the site of our 1978 National Convention was reviewed. Additional information and negotiation on rates and transportation logistics will have to be obtained before the President can make a final decision. At present a number of sites are being considered: Baltimore, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Florida, Kansas City, Detroit, and St. Louis. The NFB President was authorized to form the agenda for our 1977 National Convention in New Orleans, and numerous agenda items were suggested.

Problems in several state affiliates were considered and tentative suggestions for solutions were made.

When negotiations have failed to remove transgressions against the rights of blind

persons, the NFB has resorted to legal action to win in the courts our struggle for equal rights and first-class citizenship. The Executive Committee reviewed the status of numerous lawsuits presently engaged in by the Federation. The NFB lawsuit by executive committeewoman Sue Ammeter against the State of Washington court system is due for hearing by the Washington Supreme Court in 1977. In Pennsylvania, an appeal is before the State Supreme Court after the Attorney General's office reversed its position on settlement of the NFB lawsuit through a consent decree. In Ohio, the suit by the blind vendors against the Cleveland Society for the Blind is being appealed to a higher court. The impact of this concerted action by the blind has been felt by the Cleveland Society with the reversion of twenty-eight Randolph-Sheppard vending facilities back to direct state control—out of the hands of the Society. In Michigan, depositions are being gathered at an accelerated pace, and the Munn case against the state personnel system and agency for the blind may come to trial in the spring of 1977. In Missouri, the legal battle for the right of our NFB affiliate to use its own name is still under appeal. In Minnesota, after four years of delay, the case of the NFB of Minnesota versus the Minneapolis Society for the Blind is scheduled to come to trial in early 1977.

Discriminatory treatment of the blind by airlines received much attention by the Executive Committee. The encroachment of mandatory custodialism culminated in November when Federationists returning from the NFB of California state convention were confronted by United Airlines staff imposing a new FAA-approved regulation which sets a quota on the number of blind passengers allowed on United flights without a sighted "attendant." This policy,

which has also been put into effect by Continental Airlines, is a direct threat to the mobility and personal independence of blind people. It violates our constitutional right to freedom of travel and cannot be countenanced. The NFB is preparing to initiate a lawsuit against United and Continental Airlines and the federal regulatory agencies responsible for the restrictive ruling.

The progress of the upcoming White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals was discussed and plans considered for a key role to be played by the NFB. A number of disquieting reports have been received by the NFB National Office of some recent state White House Conferences which denied meaningful input from handicapped consumers. Federationists are urged to be vigilant to see that the organized blind have a voice at all levels of the White House Conference.

NFB Washington Office chief James Gashel reported on the activities of the 94th Congress. The Disability Insurance for the Blind bill did receive positive hearings from the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, but did not reach the House floor due to election-year pressures. Indications are that the 95th Congress will give attention to the Social Security program. Federationists should work diligently to secure co-sponsorship of our Disability Insurance bill from their U.S. Congressmen and Senators, with the goal of its passage in 1977. Meet with your Congressmen, especially freshman Congressmen, and Senators, and inform them that Jim Gashel is your personal representative in Washington.

During the final weeks of the 94th Congress, the NFB had several of its long-sought changes in the SSI program enacted. Under

SSI there will now be a three-month period of "presumptive blindness." The value of the home of an applicant or recipient will not be counted in determining eligibility for benefits. And as of July 1977, states will be required to pass along any cost-of-living increases in SSI payments.

Prospects for the blind under the new Carter-Mondale Administration were discussed. In spite of some anxieties over the position of services to the blind with proposed federal reorganization, the outlook seems bright. With many supporters in Congress, and a willingness by the Administration to learn positive concepts about blindness, Federationists will work to have

input into existing and new federal programs.

As the Executive Committee left the cold, snow-covered streets of Des Moines, heading for their homes across the country, there was a feeling of accomplishment and the anticipation of a challenging, exciting year ahead for the Federation. There was also a renewed sense of the responsibility accompanying the knowledge that we are now unquestionably the most powerful and vital force in affairs of the blind. Strength and leadership carry with them the pride of achievement and the capacity to do good, but they also impose obligations and require perspective and the long view. □

"TWO FOR ONE" POLICY BRINGS INEVITABLE RESULTS— AIRLINES DISCRIMINATE

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

Even today (after all of the battles we have had regarding the rights of sheltered shop employees, the need for disability insurance, discrimination against the blind in civil service, exclusion from colleges and universities, lack of equal opportunity in employment, etc.) there are still blind persons who fail to relate to the Federation emotionally. They tend to say something to this effect: "I have made it on my own, in competition with sighted people. There is nothing I need or want from the Federation—in fact, nothing that the organization can do for me personally."

Sometimes such blind people go on to say, almost as if they think they are being magnanimous: "If there's anything I can do to help you people [meaning, presumably, all the rest of us who are blind and supposedly

their inferiors] I will be glad to do it. But, of course, I don't want anything for myself." Pitiful as it is, such people almost seem to be saying: "I want you and the whole world to know that I have friends who are just as sighted as anybody. I am not like the rest of you blind people. I am *almost* [with heavy emphasis on the *almost*] as good as a sighted person."

A recent occurrence underlines the folly of such an attitude. To set the background, I must go back to the NFB Convention in Phoenix in 1964. A bill had just been introduced in Congress to permit the airlines to let a blind person and his or her guide travel for the price of a single ticket. It was known as the "two-for-one airfare" proposal. After considerable debate the Federation passed a resolution opposing this bill.

So far as I know, we were the only organization in the field to take such a stand. In fact, we came in for a good deal of criticism because of it.

Our rationale was misunderstood and our motives generally maligned. After all, our critics said, why not take advantage of whatever opportunities you can get? Airlines offer "family plan" reductions, and you don't see people refusing to use them because of some foolish pride or so-called "independence."

Our critics went on to say: "Maybe some of you in the Federation are so well off financially that you don't need the money, but what about the *ordinary* blind? Apparently you aren't too proud to try to get government disability insurance, but you oppose reduced airfares. Not only are you foolish but you are also inconsistent."

To all of this we had answers—although, for the most part, our critics were not listening. We said: "If a subsidy is needed, let it come from the government as a matter of right, in cash—not from a private corporation as a matter of charity, in kind. Further," we said, "we do not oppose the 'two-for-one airfare' proposal because of pride but because of its disadvantages. It is a bad deal. It will cost us more than it will give us."

"In the first place how many times a year does the ordinary blind person travel by airplane? In other words how much money would it actually save? The blind person traveling by air does not really have any difficulty in getting off or on the plane. Airline personnel are glad to walk to and from the plane with him or her, and that is all the help that is needed. Admittedly, it would be nice to be able to take a family member or friend on a trip at no extra cost—

in effect, getting each ticket for half price; but the cost to all of us would be too high. We would be saying that the blind are unable to travel alone, that the notions about our helplessness are true. We would be reinforcing the public image of our inability, thus making it harder for the blind to get jobs in industry as a whole, as well as with the airlines.

"Moreover," we went on to say, "it will not be long before what starts as an option will become a requirement. If we say to the airlines that we need a subsidy to pay for an 'attendant' to go with us, they will soon begin to take us at our word. They will refuse to permit blind persons to fly 'unattended.' For many blind persons this would simply mean staying at home since they do not have a family member or friend to go as their 'attendant.' Besides all of this the humiliation and inconvenience of being prohibited from traveling alone would be a high price to pay (monetarily and otherwise) for the doubtful blessing of the 'two-for-one airfare' privilege or, as it would become, *requirement*."

So the arguments went as the years passed by, and we took our lonely march to the witness table to fight against what almost everybody else in the field said was an obvious benefit. The first warnings of danger came two or three years back when the Federal Aviation Agency proposed to make rules regulating air travel for the sick and disabled. The rules were to be uniform in application and highly restrictive in nature. They encompassed the blind, the nonambulatory, those with contagious diseases, and a host of others. There were restrictions as to how many such people could ride on a single plane, what sections they could sit in, under what circumstances they must have "attendants," etc.

It will be remembered that the Federation testified at hearings throughout the country on these proposed rules and that, for the most part, we were the only ones present to represent the interests of the blind. Our message was simple: "We cannot speak for any other group, but include us out. The blind do not need special rules. We do not need 'attendants.' We do not need to be assigned special seating areas. Just let us alone. We need no more help than possibly someone to walk with us to and from the plane—nothing more."

Our efforts were successful and the blind were not lumped in with others and restricted. Even so, there have been nagging problems and sporadic outbursts ever since. Sometimes blind persons have been told by certain airline officials that they must surrender their canes or leave the plane. (Curtis Willoughby—see the December *Monitor*—successfully resisted this one.) More and more blind persons have been told that they could not sit in the exit row of seats. Blind persons with dog guides have been subjected to harassment. A delegate to the 1975 NFB Convention was required to sign a document releasing the airline from responsibility in case of an accident, regardless of the cause or the fault. Blind persons (this is not totally new) have been denied the right to buy flight insurance on equal terms with others.

Then came a totally new chapter. It happened in Fresno, California, on Sunday, November 7, 1976. That was the weekend of the NFB of California convention and when the delegates went to the airport to board their planes for home, they were told by United Airlines officials that a new rule (federally approved) had gone into effect as of November 1, 1976. They were told that not more than four of them could ride on

one plane. It developed that both United and Continental had received federal approval for a new policy. Depending on the size of the plane there would henceforth be a limit as to the number of blind persons who could ride without "attendants." For the very large planes, 747's and the like, the number would be ten. For most ordinary planes it would be four or six. As might be imagined, Federationists fresh from a state convention were not in the mood to submit meekly. After a heated discussion their outrage and determination were stronger than the resistance of the United flight personnel and the force of the rules. They rode the plane—all of them. But the talk about the rules was not just make-believe. It was real. They were given a copy, which was forwarded to me.

A few days later, I was contacted by the local manager of United in Des Moines. He said that he had been informed that the blind were coming out to the Des Moines Airport to picket and he asked me whether it was true. "No," I told him, "we don't plan to come today, but we do plan to sue you—and soon. We also plan to sue Continental Airlines, the Federal Aviation Agency, and the Civil Aeronautics Board."

He seemed much excited and disturbed and wanted to know whether I would talk to his superior, the area manager. I told him I would be happy to but that this would not slow our preparations for the suit. In a day or two the area manager called me. I told him the same thing. He seemed equally excited. He asked whether I would be willing to discuss the matter with one of the United vice-presidents from Chicago. I told him yes but that preparations for the suit would go forward uninterrupted and that it might well be a race as to which I would be talking with first, the vice-president or a judge.

In short order (I believe it was the Tuesday before Thanksgiving) the vice-president flew from Chicago and came to my office, accompanied by the area manager and the local manager. The conversation was friendly but spirited. At first the vice-president tried to tell me that the policy limiting the number of "unattended" blind persons who could ride on any given plane was nothing new, but that it had been in existence for years. However, we got past that part of the conversation in short order. Then he told me that he and all of the other people at United were certainly "sympathetic" to our problem and that their medical consultant (one Dr. Cordera) was especially interested to do all that he could. I told him that that was exactly the problem, that we were not dealing with a medical matter and (as far as we were concerned) it was none of the good doctor's business. This seemed to surprise him, and he alluded more than once to the fact that it had been widely held by most experts in the field that a blind person needed an "attendant" in flying. I told him that this was not our view and reminded him of our repeated testimony on the matter before congressional committees, the latest such testimony having occurred only a few weeks before. Our conversation ended with his asking me whether I would be willing to discuss the matter with the vice-president in charge of operations at United Airlines. I gave him what by now had become my standard answer: Yes, but it wouldn't delay the suit. Our meeting began and ended on a cordial note.

In a day or two the vice-president in charge of operations called me. We went through much of the same routine. He told me that he had to be concerned with the safety of passengers. I told him that we of the National Federation of the Blind were

just as concerned with safety as he was but that the subject under discussion was not a matter of safety but of misconception and discrimination. Then, he said something to this effect: "If there is an airplane accident involving a blind person, United will be responsible. There is no way (regardless of your motive) that you can protect us, so I have to be concerned. I have to take precautions."

I asked him whether, in all of the tens of millions of miles of air travel, he had ever heard of a single accident involving a blind person. He said he couldn't think of one. I told him he should consider how it would look in court when we measured our real problems caused by his restrictive rules against his imaginary safety hazards, not one of which he could bring into evidence. Then, I pointed out to him how very serious and real was the difficulty caused by the rule:

"As I understand it," I said, "the rule would work like this: I decide to go on a trip (perhaps important business), and I go to the Des Moines Airport. I have confirmed reservations. It just so happens that four other blind persons (none knowing anything about the others) also have reservations on that plane. When we show up at the airport, one of us (I don't know how you will determine which one and I doubt that you do either) will not be allowed to board, regardless of how important our business may be and regardless of the fact that we have confirmed reservations. Furthermore," I continued, "this is not the worst of it. Let us say that I am going to New York with a transfer in Chicago. We land in Chicago, and I attempt to board my New York flight. Just by chance, a blind person has arrived from Dallas who wishes to board that same flight, and four more have come from Minneapolis.

(This could easily happen since blind persons often schedule meetings of one sort or another.) Two of us will be stranded in Chicago—regardless of our meeting, regardless of our confirmed reservations, and regardless of the fact that United transported us there. Moreover this is not the end of it. We cannot be sure that we will not be stranded in New York or in Chicago on the return trip. It will mean absolute chaos in travel planning, and no end of inconvenience. In actuality it will mean that, as a matter of protection, no blind person can fly anywhere without an ‘attendant.’ Moreover, it will mean an extra financial burden since there are other expenses in travel besides the cost of the airplane ticket.”

The United vice-president admitted that this is how the policy would work. I did not point out to him what fury and confusion would occur as blind persons converged on the convention city at the time of one of our national conventions. It boggles the mind—besides which I hope we can get the policy changed before this summer’s meeting.

The vice-president said that, as a result of our conversation, he would now have to take another look at the restrictive policy. He was obviously impressed by our numbers and our determination. (I told him that he would have to determine whether the Federation meant what it said and whether I would make an articulate witness in court.) Successful negotiation is always better than conflict and I sincerely hope that both United and Continental will rescind their discriminatory rules.

This is where the matter stands at present except that preparations for the suit are going forward and that I recently received (when I was temporarily out of the office)

a call from United. I hope that when the call is completed it will convey the good news that the policy has been reversed.

Let me conclude with certain observations:

(1) The more successful the blind person, the more likely he is to fly with some regularity. If there was not a Federation, what chance would there be that the restrictive policy would be reversed? We must get more blind persons to understand this simple truth: We the blind have common problems, and they must be solved by concerted action. With respect to these problems there cannot be rich or poor, black or white, male or female, educated or uneducated, liberal or conservative, young or old—only the *blind*, working together in the movement as a single force. This does not mean any loss of individuality. It only means having the sense to work together to solve common problems.

(2) Whether we sue United and Continental Airlines, as well as the Federal Aviation Agency and the Civil Aeronautics Board, will depend upon whether they change their unreasonable policy; but it will also depend on something else—whether we have the resources to do it. It is no secret that our fundraising is in trouble. Regardless of the merit of the case, we can only do what we have the money to do. Federationists and their families and friends should make continuing donations and should give through the PAC Plan. They should, that is, if they believe the cause is worthwhile and the sacrifice is justified—small gifts as well as big ones. For information write to Richard Edlund, Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind, Box 11185, Kansas City, Kansas 66111.

(3) Surely the wisdom of the opposition to the two-for-one airfare proposal is now apparent. It once again demonstrates the validity of the democratic process—discussion and debate by the people whose lives are affected. It is the basic principle upon which the National Federation of the Blind has always operated: people have enough sense to know what is good for them and to govern themselves. If this is not valid,

democracy itself is not valid; and the very rationale for our whole governmental system is a fallacy.

The Federation is the voice of the blind. As we move toward first-class citizenship there will certainly be discouragements and setbacks; but they will not stop us. The future is ours. We know who we are, and we will never go back. □

IDAHO ATTORNEY GENERAL WRITES TO UNITED AIRLINES

STATE OF IDAHO,
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL,
Boise, Idaho, December 9, 1976.

UNITED AIRLINES,
Public Relations Office,
Chicago, Illinois.

DEAR SIR: The Idaho Commission for the Blind has advised this office that United Airlines either proposes to or is enforcing a regulation in relation to blind persons, which is illegal in Idaho. This regulation requires that only a limited number of blind persons may be accommodated on any particular air flight. We wish to advise you that *Idaho Code* §56-703 requires that blind persons are entitled to full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of all common carriers, including airlines, subject only to conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all persons, whether blind or not. *Idaho Code* §56-706 provides that any person, firm, or corporation, etc., who denies or interferes

with such full and free accommodation to the blind is guilty of a misdemeanor.

We have also looked over the Idaho Air Carrier Act under the Public Utilities Commission Law. It provides for suspension or revocation of an air carrier's permit where the air carrier is no longer willing or able to perform all or part of the certified services and conform to the law of Idaho.

We would seriously suggest to you that, if you have such a regulation and are attempting to enforce it, you should carefully examine the laws of this state and the laws of many states which are similar before you attempt to limit accommodations to a person because he is handicapped. Continuation of such a practice might well lead to problems in maintaining licensure in this state and other states.

Very truly yours,

WAYNE L. KIDWELL,
Attorney General.

□

FEDERATION BECOMES MEMBER OF
BRAILLE AUTHORITY OF NORTH AMERICA

BY
KENNETH JERNIGAN

In September of this year I received a communication from the President of the American Association of Workers for the Blind, Harold G. (Hank) Roberts of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, Inc., inviting the Federation (among others) to participate in a meeting called for the purpose of restructuring the National Braille Authority. Heretofore the Braille Authority, a mechanism designed to "make interpretations of Braille codes, study problems, render opinions, and recommend changes pertaining to all provisions of literary and technical Braille codes," had been composed of the five "sponsors" of the National Braille Authority: the American Association of Workers for the Blind (AAWB), the Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped (AEVH), and the National Braille Association (NBA).

Mr. Roberts' memo transmitted the following resolution and called a meeting on September 28, 1976, in Washington, D.C. to implement it:

Whereas: The present sponsoring associations (AAWB, AEVH, NBA) wish to involve other organizations concerned with the production, distribution, and use of Braille as participants in the support and direction of the Braille Authority of United States, and

Whereas: It is deemed necessary to enlarge the scope and effectiveness of the Braille Authority to insure increased progress in the future development of Braille,

Therefore be it resolved: The present sponsors invite the following organizations to join them as sponsors of the Braille Authority:

American Foundation for the Blind
Library of Congress (DBPH)
American Printing House for the Blind
American Council of the Blind
Blinded Veterans Association
National Federation of the Blind
Clovernook Home and School
for the Blind
Canadian National Institute for the Blind
Association for Computing Machinery
Canadian Council of the Blind

Be it further resolved: That upon accepting sponsorship, each of the above listed organizations and the three current sponsors shall appoint a representative to the governing board hereinafter called the (English) Braille Authority of North America.

Be it further resolved: That each organization participating in the BANA shall be responsible for its organization, financial support, policy direction, and administration. It is further recommended that the BANA carry out its responsibilities through appropriate technical working groups, whose chairmen shall constitute the technical review committee of the BANA.

Be it further resolved: The present Braille Authority, Advisory Council, and techni-

cal committees shall continue to serve until such time as the BANA is constituted.

I decided to go to the meeting. Others in attendance were: American Association of Workers for the Blind, Harold G. Roberts; American Council of the Blind, Durward McDaniel; American Foundation for the Blind, Loyal E. Apple; American Printing House for the Blind, Dr. Carson Nolan; Association for Computing Machinery, Robert A. J. Gildea; Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped, Mary K. Bauman; Canadian National Institute for the Blind, E. G. Brown; Cloverbrook Home and School for the Blind, Martin F. Droege; Library of Congress, Kurt Cylke and Richard Evensen; National Braille Association, Mrs. Bobbie Richman. (Mr. Terry Small, New Zealand Foundation for the Blind, attended as an observer.)

I stated at the outset that I did not know whether the Federation would wish to become part of the reorganized Braille Authority—that that decision would depend on the nature of the participation contemplated.

The current sponsors first proposed an elaborate pyramided structure which, if implemented, would in effect have limited drastically the role of the formal sponsors—making of them merely a figurehead body with but one real function—that being assumption of the financial burden of the activities of the Authority. I, along with several others, indicated that such an arrangement would not be acceptable. There then ensued a lively discussion (primarily between Mary K. Bauman of the Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped and me) concerning how it would

be possible to assure technical expertise if the enlarged membership itself were allowed in fact to run the Authority. I said that, as I saw it, there was no way and no need to give such assurance—that the current sponsors either were issuing a bona fide invitation to the rest of us to become equal partners in the operation of the Braille Authority or they were not. If such an invitation was being issued then the question was academic. We of the new Authority would do what we would do and no action taken now by the current Authority would be binding upon us. If full partnership was not being proposed then the Federation was definitely not interested in lending merely its name and financial resources to the Braille Authority. Mr. Roberts then said, with Miss Bauman and Mrs. Richman agreeing, that it was indeed the intention of the current sponsors to issue an invitation for full and equal membership in the Authority to the organizations named in the circulated resolution, and that there were no conditions to the resolution inviting increased membership in the Braille Authority. Each new sponsor would be entitled to designate one representative to serve on the proposed Braille Authority of North America and each sponsor would have one vote. It was further stipulated that although the current three sponsors had jointly proposed a revised structure, the new Braille Authority of North America would be completely free to alter this proposal in any way.

At this point I said that the National Federation of the Blind accepted the invitation and that I assumed that that meant that the four of us (AAWB, AEVH, NBA, and NFB) now *were* the Braille Authority of North America. Mr. Roberts said that he concurred. Thereupon the Library of Congress, the American Printing House for the Blind, the American Foundation for the Blind, and

Clovernook Home and School for the Blind followed suit becoming the fifth through eighth members respectively. Durward McDaniel of the American Council of the Blind indicated that he would need to consult with his board before making a decision and that he would think formal bylaws would need to be adopted before the ACB would want to join, as well as possibly the formalizing of a variety of other matters. The representatives of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Association for Computing Machinery made similar statements. Mr. Roberts was asked to continue as temporary chairman and the next meeting was set to be held on December 2 in Chicago.

The Chicago meeting convened with the following representatives in addition to the Federation present: Harold G. Roberts, American Association of Workers for the Blind; Durward McDaniel, American Council of the Blind; Loyal E. Apple, American Foundation for the Blind; Carson Nolan and Ralph McCracken, American Printing House for the Blind; Robert Gildea, Association for Computing Machinery; Mae Haarallson, Association for Education of the Visually Handicapped; Darline Bogart and Ed Brown, Canadian National Institute for the Blind; Martin Droegge, Clovernook Home and School for the Blind; Richard Evensen, Library of Congress; and Bobbie Richman, National Braille Association.

Mr. Roberts announced that the American Council of the Blind, the Association for Computing Machinery, and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind had formally accepted the invitation to membership. Dues for calendar 1977 were set at five hundred dollars per member.

Next came a discussion of a grant to improve Braille technical codes in four areas—

science and math, computer notation, music, and textbook format. This grant has been made by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped to Florida State University to be administered under the direction of Marjorie Hooper, formerly Editor of the American Printing House for the Blind. It was noted that Miss Hooper has already established four technical groups to function under the grant and in so doing has drawn heavily upon individuals comprising the technical committees of the former Braille Authority.

Under the terms of the grant any changes to be recommended as a result of the project must be reviewed and approved by the National Braille Authority which would presumably now mean its successor, the Braille Authority of North America. Much concern was expressed that if suitable coordination were not achieved between the Florida State University Project and the Braille Authority, much duplication and dilution of effort would occur. It remains to be seen whether it will prove to be unfortunate that the first major public funding for the advancement of Braille was not channeled through the established mechanism for improvement, especially now that that mechanism is more broadly representative of all interests in the field including consumers.

There was also discussion concerning the need to make literary Braille "computer compatible"—to change Braille to make possible computer translation of print into Braille without the need for human intervention. I indicated that my view (which I believed to be shared by the overwhelming majority of Braille readers) was that one of the real problems with Braille was that there was too much tampering with it already, and that any very major revision of literary

Braille would cause loss of a great many users and go a long way toward diminishing widespread use of Braille. I pointed out that it seemed to me that the philosophical issue involved was whether Braille should be designed for the convenience of the user or of technology—that revisions today to suit the needs of the computer could just as logically give way to the needs of tomorrow's technology, each time dropping current and past generations of users. One need only look at what happened to the readers of Moon, New York Point, American Braille, and Grade 1½ to see the pattern.

All of this is not to belittle the very real advantages which would result from making Braille more compatible with the computer. Rather, it is to sound a note of caution and to say that the matter must be seen in perspective. The prime consideration must be what is best for the individual Braille reader—not the computer or the programmers or the libraries or the printing houses or the

professionals or the paper manufacturers or anybody else.

Somewhere along the line, the group decided to get on with the formal organizing of the Braille Authority of North America.

Hank Roberts of AAWB was elected chairman; I was elected vice-chairman; Bobbie Richman of the National Braille Association, secretary; and Martin Droege of Clovernook, treasurer—all by acclamation. A committee was established to draft articles of incorporation and bylaws, and another to establish liaison with Marjorie Hooper and the Florida State University Project. A tentative spring meeting was set.

At lunch that day, thinking back to certain events that had occurred two weeks earlier in Chicago and New York, I could not help remarking to Eugene Apple (with whom I just happened to be eating), that one might well be astounded by the harmony of it all. He offered no comment in response. □

1977 RICKARD SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION OPENS

BY

HOWARD E. MAY

Federationists who are college students should begin on applications for the \$1,200 Howard Brown Rickard Scholarship, which will be awarded next July at the NFB National Convention in New Orleans. This amount can be very helpful to either a graduate student or an undergraduate student in furthering a degree program.

One scholarship only will be given to a blind student working in special fields of study, as indicated on the instruction sheet for the application form. Please notice

whether you are eligible. Please include all requested documents. The deadline for applications to be in the hands of the scholarship committee chairman, the Reverend Howard E. May, R.F.D. 1, West Willington, Connecticut 06279, is June 1, 1977.

This is a great opportunity for a blind student to get some financial help, and to gain the honor of being a scholarship winner. Last year, Miss Peggy Pinder won the Rickard Scholarship, and she is now a student in the Yale Law School. You may win this year.

HOWARD BROWN RICKARD SCHOLARSHIP OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

Nature of the Scholarship.—The Howard Brown Rickard Scholarship, administered by the National Federation of the Blind, is to be awarded each year to a legally blind university student studying for a professional degree as specified below. A single scholarship of \$1,200 is awarded each year. Payments will be made, one half at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, or one third at the beginning of each of three quarters.

This scholarship was established by a bequest of Thomas E. Rickard in honor of his father, Howard Brown Rickard.

Who is Eligible?—Any legally blind university student in the professions of **Law, Medicine, Engineering, Architecture,** or the **Natural Sciences**, including undergraduates in these fields, is eligible to apply.

While anyone may apply for the award, in order to be considered he must:

(1) Be sponsored by the state affiliate where he is going to school or in the state where he makes his home, and if there be no such affiliate he must secure sponsorship in a manner deemed appropriate by the chairman of the scholarship committee.

(2) Attend the NFB Convention at which the scholarship is to be awarded.

How To Apply.—Fill out completely the attached application and mail it to the Reverend Howard May, Chairman, Rickard Scholarship Committee, R.F.D. 1, West Willington, Connecticut 06279, by June 1, 1977. □

HOWARD BROWN RICKARD SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Applicant's full name _____ Age _____ Sex _____

Address _____
Street

City State ZIP Code Phone _____

Home address (permanent) _____
Street

City State ZIP Code Phone _____

High school attended _____ City _____

College you are now attending _____ City _____

Number of units completed by end of present term _____

Colleges previously attended (indicate the year you attended college and the total number of units completed at each college).

_____ From _____ To _____ Units _____

_____ From _____ To _____ Units _____

Major subject _____

List name and amount of any scholarships you have received or are receiving:

Attach the following:

- (1) Transcripts from all colleges you have attended (if you are entering college, attach your high school transcript).
- (2) A statement of 250 words giving your reason for applying for this scholarship and telling how it will assist you to achieve a professional goal, including, if you wish, information about your financial situation. Please include information about your visual acuity indicating whether you are partially or totally blind.
- (3) Recommendation of sponsoring NFB affiliate.

Date

Signature

Make sure all spaces are filled in and mail application by June 1, 1977 to:

REVEREND HOWARD MAY, Chairman
Rickard Scholarship Committee
R. F. D. 1
West Willington, Connecticut 06279

ANOTHER VICTORY: BLIND BUSINESSMEN WILL RECEIVE FREE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE

Ever since the telephone company, some years ago, began to consider charging a fee for directory assistance, the Federation has worked to exclude the blind from the fee. Such charges, we argued, would weigh most heavily on the blind and physically handicapped who cannot use the print telephone directories. After some persuasion, the telephone company agreed. But they were willing to allow the blind free directory assistance calls only when they were using their home phones. If a blind person shared a work phone, then no calls to directory assistance from that line would be exempt from the charge. The phone company ruling grew out of the technical difficulties of preventing non-handicapped callers from claiming the exemption: but whatever the reason, the NFB felt that the ruling would work an unreasonable hardship on the blind. Resolution 76-07, passed in Los Angeles last summer, stated our position. Here is part of that resolution:

Whereas prospective employers often use the excuse of increased cost as a rationale for not hiring qualified blind persons; and

Whereas many blind persons are employed in occupations, such as real estate or sales work, that demand a constant use of directory assistance in order to perform the job; and

Whereas such an added cost to employers will present an additional barrier to the employment opportunities of the blind inasmuch as employers will be forced to

bear the cost for directory assistance calls when a blind person cannot use a single designated phone line; and

Whereas such policies constitute unequal treatment and discrimination against the blind in employment: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved . . . that this organization take all necessary action to see that telephone companies develop systems so that employers will not be charged for the directory assistance calls which are made by their blind employees; and

Be it further resolved that this organization reaffirms its position that all telephone companies charging for directory assistance calls grant residence and business phone exemptions to the blind in all cases.

Federation leaders around the country began to negotiate with the telephone company. We have been successful. The first sign of this came from Kansas, where NFB Treasurer Richard Edlund had been corresponding with the phone company. In December he received the following letter from Southwestern Bell Telephone:

DEAR CUSTOMER: Southwestern Bell has modified its directory assistance charging program to allow handicapped customers to use their exemptions from charges when calling directory assistance away from home.

Starting January 1, 1977, handicapped customers wishing to call directory assist-

ance while away from home should dial the Operator (0) and charge the directory assistance call to their regular credit card numbers. They will not be billed for the call.

If you do not have a credit card and wish to take advantage of this arrangement, please call our Southwestern Bell business office and a credit card will be sent to you. Directory assistance calls from your home will continue to be charged in the usual way when you dial 1 + 411.

We hope this change will make it easier for you to use directory assistance wherever you go. . . .

In Vermont, meanwhile, the same matter had come up for settlement by the State Public Service Board. Federationist Don Morris traveled north to testify on behalf of the NFB; he was the sole spokesman for the blind at the hearings. What Federationists achieve on the plains of the Midwest benefits the blind of the Green Mountains of New England. This is an axiom of our movement, and it is illustrated here. The decision in Kansas became a precedent. Also, the testimony of Don Morris was eloquent enough to earn him and us a specific mention in the official findings of the Public Service Board. Here are the pertinent portions of the Board findings:

(1) On March 31, 1976 New England Telephone and Telegraph Company (NET) filed with the Board a Directory Assistance Service tariff relating to exemptions for blind persons . . . to become effective December 31, 1976.

(3) On December 1, 1976, a hearing was held regarding the reasonableness of this tariff.

(4) As a result of that hearing the Board makes the following Findings:

(d) . . . The Board finds the testimony of Mr. Morris of the National Federation of the Blind to be very convincing that a provision such as requested by NET would be an unreasonable and unnecessary obstacle for the visually and physically handicapped to overcome in attempting to find employment.

The Board has reviewed a tariff of Southwestern Bell for directory assistance . . . which exempts directory assistance charges on "calls from customers whose physical or visual handicaps or lack of literacy prevent them from using the telephone directory." There was no evidence that the type of provision used by Southwestern Bell in the State of Kansas would cause any greater revenue losses than the system proposed by NET. In these circumstances the Board finds that at this time credit cards should be issued to legally blind or visually or physically handicapped people for use by them when using all phones other than their registered residence main telephone exchange line that are not otherwise exempt from directory assistance charges. This will preserve most of the savings from the institution of directory assistance charges, while at the same time not interfering with the opportunities of visually or physically handicapped people obtaining employment. . . .

Thus, the principle has been established that the blind shall be exempt from charges

for directory assistance at home and at work. And we are clearly approaching the point where the principle is established that the Federation speaks for the blind of the nation. This can be seen in what happened in Kansas and Vermont: In Vermont, the NFB was empowered to certify that a blind person is qualified for the directory assistance exemption—this is the officially agreed-

upon procedure. In Kansas, Richard Edlund got his application for the exemption and listed his home and office phone lines. He then certified the application by signing himself as the president of the NFB of Kansas, and sent it off to see what would come of it. The application went right through and the exemptions were forthcoming. □

FEDERATIONIST APPOINTED DISTRICT COURT JUDGE IN MAINE

BY

STEVEN P. ROSENFELD

Editor's Note.—Courtland Perry is a board member of the NFB of Maine. This article concerning his appointment to the bench is the property of the Associated Press, which has given permission for its reprinting. Titled "Judge, Corrections Head Are Confirmed," the article originally reported another appointment as well.

Courtland D. Perry was confirmed Wednesday [October 13] as a district court judge, and is believed to be the first blind man in Maine's history to be placed on the bench.

At hearings earlier in the day, a lawyer and a minister both testified that Perry's blindness should not be a barrier to his appointment to the Seventh District court

seat vacated by the retirement of Judge Roland J. Poulin of Waterville.

Reverend Bruce W. Meyers, the pastor of Perry's Lutheran church, said Perry "has the ability to hear what is really said, to hear between words and behind words to get to the heart of an issue."

Augusta lawyer Jon R. Doyle said that Perry "has in his mind an enormous storehouse of information."

Attorney General Joseph E. Brennan said Perry would dispense evenhanded justice. Brennan said he believed that one day Perry would serve on the state's highest court.

Perry, 40, an assistant attorney general since 1961, will receive \$23,000 a year as a district court judge. □

CHICAGO POSTSCRIPT

Much of the January 1977 issue of the *Monitor* was devoted to developments in the effort of the workshop employees at the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind to form a union. We reported the firing of the leaders of the organizing movement and the Federation demonstration on the streets of Chicago. We now print some documents which came out of that demonstration. First is a report from Stephen Benson, president of the NFB's Chicago Chapter. His letter describes picketing by Chicago Lighthouse staff at our Chicago Chapter meeting. The leaflet handed out by these pickets is reprinted next—an astonishing piece of work and one which requires comment. The leaflet is reprinted in full, but editorial comment appears within the document, enclosed in brackets.

We conclude with the latest from Fred McDonald, director of the Lighthouse—a letter sent to Illinois Governor Daniel Walker seeking to discredit the NFB and its leaders in Illinois. The letter contains a striking collection of some of the most common anti-Federation propaganda: that we are all members of the “NFB of Des Moines, Iowa”; that we represent “less than one percent of the blind”; that we want to close all sheltered workshops; that we reject the multiply handicapped; that having conned the news media into treating us with respect, we are carrying out our program of destroying services to the blind; and a variety of other such foolish nonsense. As long as Mr. McDonald continues to act in—to use his own words—“such an openly destructive manner,” we are glad to be his forum. We let him defend himself by printing his letters. On the principle of giving a man enough rope.

CHICAGO CHAPTER, NFB OF ILLINOIS,
Chicago, Illinois, December 12, 1976.

DEAR MR. JERNIGAN: Yesterday, December 11, the Chicago Chapter held its monthly meeting. That in itself is not particularly worthy of a letter to you but there were two events of interest that did take place. Our meeting was picketed by staff members of the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind; for a while, that is. I arrived at the meeting site at 1:00 p.m. and found about ten picketers. They carried signs which we saw at the Lighthouse on November 19 and also at least one sign saying something to the effect that no deaf-blind people could be found in the Federation. The Lighthouse demonstrators do not have mulish stamina; they were gone by 2:00 p.m.

Some of our chapter members were upset by the incident and wanted me to do something about it. My reply was that they were giving us some free advertising, and I expressed the hope they had the sense to issue a press release good enough to get the press out so we could once again have a public forum in print whereby the Lighthouse could be seen hanging itself. There was no press there, as far as I know. We ignored them and they went away.

The second event of the day took place as the second half of our meeting: it was our annual Christmas auction. All of the funds generated by this auction will be sent to Dick Edlund for deposit in the national treasury—all seven hundred and fifty-two dollars.

Mr. Jernigan, I am satisfied that our Chicago Chapter is beginning to make real

progress. Fully a third of the Federationists on the line on November 19 were Chicago Chapter members, and they and others are ready to do it again when necessary. In addition, our members have contributed close to one thousand dollars to the national treasury during the months of November and December. Several new people have taken PAC pledge cards, and there is clear evidence of stronger and stronger commitment to our goals, to our philosophy. Our members clearly have a fuller understanding of the national implications of what happens to blind people in Chicago, or Cleveland, or California. It has indeed been a good year in the Federation and all of the encouraging signs lend additional stimulus to go forward.

You will be interested to know that at this time it appears that there will be at least fifty Illinoisians in New Orleans, still another indication of our growth.

I hope to see you soon.

Cordially,

STEPHEN O. BENSON,
*President, Chicago Chapter,
NFB of Illinois.*

[Here is the leaflet handed out by staff members of the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind as they picketed our Chicago Chapter's meeting. The remarks in brackets are the *Monitor's* comments.]

Today the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois (NFB) is meeting at its Chicago chapter at 110 South Dearborn.

The Independent Blind of Illinois wishes to announce their opposition to this organi-

zation. [The "Independent Blind of Illinois" apparently are the staff members of the Chicago Lighthouse although the leaflet suggests that it is an ongoing organization of blind persons. We all know how independent the employees of the Chicago Lighthouse are.]

The NFB national headquarters has a self-avowed purpose of the complete takeover and/or destruction of blind services in every state of the nation. Their philosophy is that blindness is not a handicap but merely an inconvenience. According to Kenneth Jernigan, the national leader, physical fitness can overcome all. [The contempt felt by the writers of this leaflet for their audience is clear here. They wanted to create some negative propaganda to hand out as they picketed, but they felt no need to take the time to create a believable document.]

This philosophy represents a direct threat to the rehabilitation and social needs of the multiply handicapped, the educationally deprived, and poverty-level minority groups which comprise the bulk of today's blind population in America. [This is a favorite agency charge against the NFB—that we care only for the blind lawyer, the blind physicist, the blind professor, and that we ignore the elderly, the poor, the multiply handicapped blind. This despite the fact that our major programs are aimed directly at the economic handicaps of blindness—disability insurance, laws guaranteeing the acceptance of the blind in education, jobs, housing. Our greatest recent effort in this direction is the one these phony pickets are protesting—our effort to gain the protection of labor laws for workers in sheltered workshops. To find this charge emanating from the Lighthouse may mark a new highpoint in the lowpoints of hypocrisy.]

The Independent Blind of Illinois advocate the development of all meaningful programs for the blind and other handicapped.

The NFB wishes to destroy all sheltered workshops and take over agencies which do not conform to their philosophy. In the seven years the NFB has been organizing in Illinois, few if any programs have been advocated by this organization.

In the mid-November issue of *Changing Times* magazine is stated that several attorney generals have refused to allow the NFB to solicit funds in their states because the NFB does not provide any direct services for blind individuals. [This statement is not true. The November issue of *Changing Times* lists fifty-three charitable organizations and classifies them according to a number of categories. We declined to send them financial disclosure of the specific kind they requested, and they note that fact. They also note that they and other rating groups (the private National Information Bureau, the Better Business Bureau) disapprove of sending merchandise through the mail as a spur to fundraising. None of this is new. No specific discussion of the NFB occurs at all.

But even though *Changing Times* did not charge us with failure to provide "direct services," that charge has been made before - by Lighthouse officials, among others. Milton Samuelson, associate director, was quoted in the Chicago *Tribune* as saying: "Where is the NFB training program? They don't place any people in jobs, and we place about fifty a year." This charge is absurd; it is akin to General Motors' complaining to the United Auto Workers, "You accuse us of unfair practices, but where are the cars *you* produce?" We are the blind consumers of services, organized to have a

say in the provision of those services. Needless to say, no state attorney general has ever faulted us for not providing direct services to the blind.]

In the State of California, a lobbyist for the NFB has recently been indicted for defrauding the California Industries for the Blind of one million dollars. Irresponsible statements and attacks on programs of public and private organizations and agencies for the blind have been continually made by the NFB. [This statement is totally misleading. The word "indict" can mean simply "accuse"; but its legal, and most common, meaning is a formal accusation by a grand jury - a criminal charge. What is referred to is a civil suit brought by the California ACB affiliate against Tony Mannino as chairman of the Board of California Industries for the Blind (CIB). A civil suit can be brought by anyone and can be filed even though there is no basis for its charges whatsoever. The suit in question here is regarded by us as purely a nuisance suit: although it has been pending for about a year, no attempt has been made to prove the allegations or move the suit along to court. A trial in the press is what the originators of the lawsuit had in mind. Never a lobbyist, Tony Mannino was president of the NFB of California for years, and then executive secretary until his death last September. The political nature of the suit is testified to by the fact that despite the death of the defendant, Tony's friends and colleagues in California have pledged to continue the defense of the suit until his name is cleared.]

Newly blinded people are afraid to come forth. Other individuals see little hope for themselves because of the continual propaganda aimed at them by the National Federation of the Blind state affiliates. [Do you suppose these newly blinded people

full of fear and with little hope for themselves are the same ones who, in the third paragraph, are being misled by the NFB into believing that blindness is no handicap? Do you suppose the writers of this leaflet read it all the way through before distributing it to the public?]

The Independent Blind of Illinois appeal to Governor-elect James Thompson not to reappoint Steve Benson to the board of Vocational Education and Rehabilitation for the Illinois Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and not to reappoint Rami Rabby to the board of the Governor's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped. Better representation can be found among the leaders of Illinois' blind population.

We appeal to the general public to aid in the campaign to hire the blind and other handicapped through the Illinois Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

We ask all public officials to carefully examine any proposals coming from the NFB.

We ask you to treat the blind and all handicapped with dignity and respect.

THE CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE
FOR THE BLIND,
November 22, 1976.

The Honorable DANIEL WALKER,
*Governor, State of Illinois,
Springfield, Illinois.*

DEAR GOVERNOR WALKER: Rami Rabby, a member of your committee representing the handicapped, called for and led picketing of the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind on November 19, 1976, by pickets of the

National Federation of the Blind of Des Moines, Iowa.

Also prominent in this attack on the Lighthouse was Mr. Steve Benson of the National Federation of the Blind whom you recently named to the board of the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Representatives of every major organization joined Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind workers in counter-picket demonstrations, repudiating the National Federation of the Blind which represents less than one percent of the blind of Illinois.

The National Federation of the Blind openly proclaimed to the press during the picketing that there was no need for sheltered workshops in this country—an open admission of their disregard for the multiply handicapped blind. The blind workers from our agency and all other services for the blind in Illinois resent such men functioning in such an openly destructive manner, yet serving on such prestigious committees. It is because of their position on these committees that the news media treats them as responsible advocates for the handicapped.

We have secured support of all agencies in Illinois for the blind and intend to protest by every means at our disposal.

We call for a full investigation by your office of this harassment of the leading agency promoting employment of the blind in Illinois. (See attached summary.)

Sincerely,

FRED W. McDONALD,
Executive Director.

□

"I MADE IT ON MY OWN, OR DID I?"

BY

JAMES OMVIG

Often (probably even more often than we would care to admit) we meet blind persons who say, "I made it on my own." Most often, I suspect that this statement is intended to justify a failure to participate in the organized blind movement. So far as I am concerned, however, no blind person in this country has "made it on his own." Even in the case of those blind individuals who have never heard of the National Federation of the Blind and thus have had no opportunity to join with us, we of the organized blind movement have made substantial impact upon their lives.

Recently we made a big breakthrough which constitutes yet another step in our march toward security, equality, and opportunity for all blind Americans. We all know that blind persons have continually been discriminated against in the purchase of almost every type of insurance. The letter and newspaper article which follow are self-explanatory, and they tell the story. As you read these items, ask yourself, "Why the National Federation of the Blind?"

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
Des Moines, Iowa, July 26, 1976.

Mr. HERBERT W. ANDERSON,
*Commissioner of Insurance,
Iowa State Insurance Department,
Des Moines, Iowa.*

DEAR MR. ANDERSON: By this letter I wish to file a formal complaint of discrimination in the sale of insurance against the Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company and

its subsidiary, Tele-Trip Company, Inc., 3113 Dodge Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68131.

Circumstances leading up to the filing of this complaint are these: I am blind. On Friday afternoon, July 2, 1976, I went to the insurance counter at the airport in Des Moines, Iowa, to purchase trip insurance for me and my wife to provide us with protection during a forthcoming trip. I was astonished when the clerk informed me that I could purchase only \$20,000/\$10,000 worth of trip insurance for twenty-one days at the rate of \$7.50, since I am aware that much higher amounts of protection are available for those who are willing to pay the increased premium. I asked the clerk if there were not some error and she told me that \$20,000/\$10,000 would be the maximum amount available to me. A thought struck me. I said, "My wife is sighted. How much insurance can I purchase for her?" After some calculation she replied that for \$42.50 I could purchase \$325,000/\$50,000 worth of insurance for my sighted wife. I asked, "Are you telling me that my blindness is the reason for the discrepancy in the policies?" She replied, "Yes." She went on to state that this was not her decision but is company policy.

She then showed me the company manual on trip insurance. Section 31-B reads as follows: "Not to be issued to persons obviously infirm, crippled, or blind or when intended primarily for sports hazard coverage. For complete underwriting rules, see 'Policy and Underwriting Bulletin MPB-1518.'" I, of course, did not buy the insurance.

For clarification, perhaps I should explain the \$325,000/\$50,000 and the \$20,000/\$10,000 amounts. It is my understanding that if insured persons are killed or dismembered while in flight, the sighted person or his estate would recover \$325,000, while the blind person or his estate would recover \$20,000. If the injury or death occurred during the course of the trip but in situations other than flight, the company would pay \$50,000 to the sighted person or his estate and \$10,000 to the blind person or his estate.

On the face of it this policy is absurd and constitutes a clear case of unreasonable discrimination in the sale of insurance.

Let us first examine the comparative reimbursements to be paid, and then let me comment generally to you regarding insurance for blind persons. First, consider the "in flight" coverage. The sighted person may be insured for \$325,000 while the blind person may be insured for only \$20,000. By what stretch of the imagination would a blind person be a higher risk during flight? If my wife and I had purchased the insurance, and if the plane had crashed, I believe that we would be equally dead. Further, I believe that my blindness would in no way have contributed to my death. I did not propose to fly the plane—only to ride on it along with other passengers. Perhaps the insurance company has actuarial statistics to prove that I am a higher risk while in flight, but I doubt it.

Although the discrepancy for coverage during the remainder of the trip is less dramatic, I believe that it is equally fallacious and discriminatory. On the ground, my wife would be insured for \$50,000 while I would be insured for \$10,000. Again, perhaps the insurance company has

statistics to show that I am a higher risk while traveling in cars or on buses but, again, I doubt it.

Relevant to the discussion which follows is a statement of philosophy of the National Federation of the Blind. We believe that we who are blind are normal, ordinary men and women who are merely a cross section of our society as a whole. We believe that we can compete successfully in employment and in community and family affairs. We recognize that our problem as blind people is not to be found in the physical fact of our blindness, but rather is to be found in the wide range of public attitudes—the misunderstandings and misconceptions—which have existed for centuries in our society regarding blindness and blind people. In short, we who are blind must deal with a social problem, not a physical one. As a minority group we must strive to eradicate society's outdated notion of the helpless blind man, and replace it with the true facts about the normality and the capability of blind persons.

Now, let me turn generally to a discussion of insurance for the blind. Some companies will not sell insurance to blind persons at all. Some will sell basic policies but at a marked-up rate. A few will sell a basic policy at a standard rate, but refuse to sell the extras to blind persons. To the best of my belief and knowledge, these discriminatory practices are not based upon actuarial statistics: that is, there is no actuarial evidence which shows that blind persons die more easily or at an earlier age, are more susceptible to illness, etc., than sighted persons. Rather, we are dealing with myth, misconception, stereotyping, and superstition: that is, we who are blind constitute an identifiable minority group, and insurance carriers "believe" that we are greater risks

since they are part of a greater society which "believes" that the blind as a class are incompetent, helpless, second-class persons.

The fact is that those of us who are blind are ordinary normal people. We are a cross section of our society as a whole. We are no more accident-prone than others in our society. In fact, strange as it may seem, I believe that statistics would indicate that percentage-wise blind persons have fewer accidents than sighted persons. These are all facts, and mere opinion should not be permitted to becloud the issue. If the insurance company in question has actuarial statistics which contradict these facts, I would be pleased to see them.

Mr. Anderson, another issue needs to be dealt with so that the company's response might be put into proper perspective. This is not the first time in which I have been involved with insurance discrimination. Insurance companies often attempt to shift the burden of proof to us. They say something like this: "It is true that we do not have statistics to show that blind persons are a poorer risk than sighted persons who are similarly situated, but we 'believe' that this would be the case. If you can show us evidence that you are not poorer risks, kindly provide us with that evidence and we might change our policies." I believe that this feeble defense totally misses the point. In our country we are presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. I believe that insurance companies should be made to live up to this fundamental principle. Blind persons should be presumed to be equal risks with the sighted until such time that insurance companies possess actuarial statistics which prove that we are not. When such statistics are available (if they ever become available), we will be happy to be treated differently. Putting it another way, the burden of proof

"must" be upon insurance companies, not upon the blind.

On the whole question of classification of minority groups, what would happen if a company refused to sell standard insurance to all blacks on the theory that, "We believe they are greater risks"? No thinking person would accept such a posture, and we also believe that the application of this rationale to the blind as a class is just as absurd as it is when applied to blacks or to other minority groups.

One final area should be touched upon. Some insurance companies have attempted to explain away the discriminatory practices by saying: "Some blind persons have heart problems. Some blind persons are diabetics. Some blind persons have multiple sclerosis. Some blind persons are epileptic. Etc." These statements, of course, are true. However, they have no relevance to anything. They certainly have no relevance to the insurability of the blind as a class.

Such reasoning is an exercise in sophistry of the most blatant kind. Let me show you what I mean: "Some Iowans have heart disease. Some Iowans are diabetics. Some Iowans have multiple sclerosis. Some Iowans are epileptic. Etc." Again, these statements are true. However, what relevance do they have to the insurability of Iowans as a class? They obviously possess no relevance whatever. No rational human being would suggest for one moment that, even though these statements are true, Iowans as a class are poor risks. Rather, those who have heart disease, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and epilepsy would reasonably be singled out since actuarial statistics are available to show that these conditions may result in higher risks. In short, my hope is that you will not be hoodwinked and flimflammed

by some of the frivolous responses which you may receive in answer to this and other complaints.

Thank you very much for your attention to this letter. The time has come when we simply must achieve equal treatment for blind persons by the insurance industry. If you wish further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

JAMES OMVIG,
*Assistant to the President,
National Federation of the Blind.*

**FIRM IN SHIFT, WILL INSURE BLIND
ON SAME BASIS AS FOR SIGHTED**

[Reprinted from the Des Moines Register,
September 15, 1976.]

A company that refused to sell a blind person as much flight insurance as it would his sighted wife has changed its policy.

The Tele-Trip Company, a subsidiary of Mutual of Omaha, announced Tuesday that maximum flight insurance limits for all persons—sighted or blind—will be \$375,000.

The company formerly set a maximum limit of \$225,000 flight insurance for blind persons while sighted persons could buy up to \$375,000 coverage.

James Omvig of Des Moines, an official of the National Federation of the Blind, had complained that Mutual of Omaha allowed him to buy \$325,000 flight insur-

ance for his sighted wife, but only \$20,000 coverage for himself on a recent trip.

He asked Iowa Insurance Commissioner Herbert Anderson whether a commercial airliner is any more likely to crash if there is a blind person among the passengers than if all the passengers were sighted.

Anderson said his department is writing a rule requiring that flight insurance be offered on the same basis to blind and sighted persons unless a company proves a differential is justified.

A Tele-Trip Company spokesman said Tuesday the restriction was eliminated as a result of "recently completed studies and the recent relaxation of previous restrictions on blind travelers by regulatory agencies."

But Kenneth Jernigan, President of the National Federation of the Blind and Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, said he doesn't believe any new studies were necessary to justify abolishing the restriction.

"I believe the knowledge was there all the time to show there is no greater hazard to have a blind person than a sighted person as a passenger on an airplane," Jernigan said.

Len Tondl, second vice-president of Mutual of Omaha, said Tele-Trip was glad Omvig called attention to the problem.

"These things make us back off and take a look at policies that may have been established years ago," he said.

In Omvig's case, he said, the problem was compounded because an inexperienced clerk at the Des Moines Municipal Airport

incorrectly interpreted the company's policy to him. Tele-Trip operates insurance outlets in most major airports throughout North America and provides travel insurance plans through numerous travel agencies.

Note that this change in policy is not limited to the sale of insurance in Iowa but rather applies nationwide. If you are one of those persons who "made it on his own," think about this article as you travel around the country with full insurance protection for you and your family. □

NEVADA CONVENTION

BY

JOHN TAIT

Our convention was held at the Fremont Hotel in Las Vegas, October 15-17, 1976. President Audrey Tait presided throughout the convention, and Second Vice-President K. O. Knudson acted as master of ceremonies during the banquet. We were honored to have addresses by Governor Michael O'Callaghan and by the Director of the Department of Human Resources, Roger Trounsey.

At the banquet Lawrence Marcelino, NFB Secretary, and national representative at the convention, gave a very stimulating address on the importance of the Federation. Mrs. Mildred Mann spoke on the ceramics program at the Southern Nevada Sightless Blind Center and how ceramics was proving to be a very meaningful medium for self-expression by blind students. Mr. Benny Parrish of the Region IX Planning Office brought us up to date on SSI developments and was generally helpful throughout the convention. Dr. Morris Pearlman discussed the latest developments in ophthalmology. Mr. Oscar Ford, Director of the State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, described current developments in library services. Finally, Mrs. Pat Van Betten informed us of consumer league objectives for the coming legislative year.

During the convention considerable dissatisfaction was expressed with Nevada's Bureau of Services to the Blind, and with its position in the departmental umbrella.

Resolutions were passed which: condemned the Bureau for neglecting the rural blind and called for stationing of the Bureau's rural workers in a rural office rather than locating them in urban centers; called upon the legislature to insist that any increases in the budget of the state agency for the blind be spent on client services rather than on increases in staff; summarized the problems which the blind have been having with the state's services to the blind. This resolution pointed out the agency's wasteful inefficiencies and called for the establishment of a state commission for the blind, a majority of whose members will be blind, with a director who preferably is blind and who will serve at the pleasure of the commission.

The officers elected for the coming year include: Audrey Tait, president; Cleo Fellers, first vice-president; K. O. Knudson, second vice-president; John Tait, secretary; Jim Waggoner, treasurer; and Paul Quick, chaplain. Board members elected were Ella Council, Mary Guy, Hilda Thompson, and Carl Clontz. □

CONNECTICUT CONVENTION

BY

HOWARD E. MAY

The NFB of Connecticut held its annual convention on Saturday, November 6, 1976, at the University of Bridgeport. The theme was, "Where the action is."

The afternoon sessions featured two panel presentations. The first was entitled "Employment and Affirmative Action for the Blind." It brought together John Davis, chief of rehabilitation at the state agency; Ms. Thelma Ball, affirmative action officer of the State Personnel Department; a representative of the Hartford Chamber of Commerce, who did not show up; and James Gashel, national representative at the convention.

The second panel dealt with "Programs and Problems of the Senior Blind." The State Commissioner of the Department of Aging promised to come, but did not arrive. Mrs. Frieda Wiegler, chief of adult services of the state agency, was present, as were Mr. Walter Adams, president of the Connecticut Council of Senior Citizens Clubs, and Louis Halpern, director of the Association of Extended Health Care Facilities of Connecticut. The delegates spent forty-five minutes in questions and comments, some rather pointed and telling. In each panel discussion, our hope was to get these agencies together and to have some input by the blind into their thinking.

John Davis showed some openness to the problems of finding jobs for blind people. Both the president of the Senior Citizens Clubs and the director of convalescent home facilities admitted they had not given much

thought to blind people. Mr. Halpern offered to arrange for audiences of persons working in the health care field as well as a place to meet if we would provide the leadership for such training sessions on work with the blind.

During the morning business sessions, we passed resolutions opposing the reorganization of state government into umbrella agencies; opposing a "turn right on redlight" law; opposing the Allied Leadership League; calling on the state library to meet with consumers of the library service; calling on the state agency to set up its own training program for vending stand operators; supporting the State Human Rights Commission for maintaining its independence in the umbrella structure; and calling for the proper enforcement of the affirmative action programs.

At the noon banquet, Mrs. Shirley Lebowitz was presented a plaque, our "Outstanding Leadership Award," for services and leadership over the past seven years. Because of poor health, Shirley has withdrawn from the presidency of the Hartford Chapter and the vice-presidency of the state affiliate. James Gashel gave a thought-provoking address at the banquet.

State officers elected were: Howard E. May, president; Jonathan May, first vice-president; Daniel Tang, a graduate student at the University of Connecticut, second vice-president; Peggy Pinder, secretary; Arthur Johnson, treasurer; and directors, Mrs. Ruth Gordon and Junerose Killian.

Continuing directors are Mrs. Betty Paccelli of Danbury and Roger Blouin of Newington.

At the supper meeting chapter presidents reported their activities for the year. Miss

Peggy Pinder spoke the finale of the convention. We went home, tired but uplifted, and ready for an increasingly active and productive year. We will see you in New Orleans. □

RECIPIES OF THE MONTH

SUBMITTED BY
SHARON OMVIG

Sharon Omvig is a member of the Des Moines Chapter, NFB of Iowa.

SPRING SALAD

1 small box lime jello	1 cup little marshmallows
½ cup pineapple juice	½ cup crushed pineapple
½ pint whipped cream	½ cup chopped pecans
1 small carton cottage cheese	

Combine jello and pineapple juice (no water) and boil for 7 minutes. Let cool till syrupy. Combine syrup mixture with whipped cream. Add remaining ingredients and stir. Chill. Serves 6 to 8.

MONSTER COOKIES

1 dozen eggs	8 teaspoons baking soda
1 pound butter or oleo	18 cups quick oats
2 pounds brown sugar	1 pound chocolate chips
4 cups sugar	1 pound nuts
¼ cup vanilla	1 large package M&M's
3 pounds peanut butter	

Mix in order using large bowl. Drop by tablespoon on baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. □

MONITOR MINIATURES

The January issue contained a fairly comprehensive report of the NAC demonstrations in November. Since then a report has reached us of the meeting, during the demonstration at the American Foundation for the Blind, between Eugene Apple, AFB executive director, and Richard Edlund, John McCraw, and Doris Samuels of the NFB. Here is that report:

The NFB position paper [see the January *Monitor*] was read aloud. We asked Mr. Apple to respond to the six initial "steps" denoted therein, and he responded that the information preceding the "steps" was "hogwash" and "garbage," "not true," "vicious," and "not well founded." Mr. Edlund patiently explained that blind people should have control over their own lives. Mr. Apple responded by saying that he had no control over anyone's life; that NAC, in the persons of their board people who work daily with the "service system" and "give it their best efforts"—may have control to an extent; and that he advised us to seek NFB representation on NAC's board to achieve our ends. Mr. Apple reiterated that NAC is doing the best it can, that NAC is responsible to the people in the field, and that there is consumer representation in their governing body.

Mr. Edlund and Mr. McCraw pointed out that the so-called consumer representation was handpicked and not representative of the organized blind. Mr. Apple did not reply.

Mr. Apple said that he regretted that the NAC ad hoc committee negotiations were broken off prematurely, and that the emotional climate had been poor, showing "ill

faith" and a "dog in the manger" attitude. He felt that if we had negotiated further we might have been able to nominate NFB people to the NAC Board. Mr. Edlund and Mr. McCraw stated that the NFB desired to submit a list of ten names in nomination, with the proviso that if any appointed board member did not do his job well, he would be removed by the NFB and the NFB would select his successor.

Mr. McCraw asked Mr. Apple if he were familiar with the rump sessions involving the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind. Mr. Apple replied, "Don't start on that stuff."

Two photographers and a reporter entered the room and requested permission to interview Mr. Apple and the NFB delegation together. Mr. Apple requested that he be interviewed privately. As we were leaving the room, we heard him comment, "Sad situation."

After we returned, Mr. Edlund bluntly asked whether AFB intends to continue to fund NAC, and Mr. Apple replied, "NAC is the primary means of upgrading standards for our people. As long as the field asks for assistance, they will get it." Mr. Apple further stated that he felt it was unreasonable for the NFB to require NAC to be letter-perfect. We then asked him whether he was aware of outrages at NAC-accredited facilities in Chicago, Maryland, and Kansas; and we gave him specifics. Mr. Apple demanded facts, the names of agencies, and documented incidents to corroborate what we had been telling him. He stated that he would then "follow up." This is the NAC

"documentation" game familiar to Federationists (see the December 1973 *Monitor*).

* * * * *

In the midst of the attention paid to the November NAC demonstration, we missed reporting another demonstration in New York nearly a month earlier—Foundation Day. Here is a report from Rita Chernow, president of the NFB of New York State:

On Thursday, October 28, 1976, the American Foundation for the Blind was once again busy celebrating its founding, and for the fourth year, the Federation was on hand to help out. By far, this was the best demonstration yet by New York City Federationists. Over thirty of our members turned out to chant and sing at the doors of the Foundation. Such expressions as "AFB hurts the blind," "consumerism, not custodialism," and "AFB won't listen to the blind" could be heard for blocks. We also got in a couple rounds of "Glory, Glory, Federation" and "We Shall Overcome" as we brought pedestrian traffic to a halt. This was not done deliberately; we just couldn't help it—the entrance to the Foundation is such that if more than ten people stand in front of it, it looks like a mob scene.

In addition to leaflets and signs, we also had some large balloons on which slogans were written. Every two minutes a balloon would pop; and every time that happened, a cheer went up from the demonstrators—which added to the spirit of the occasion. Several VIP visitors to the Foundation drove up to the entrance of the building in taxis, gave one look at us, and did not enter the building, at least by that entrance. It was a beautiful day, a spirited group, and a warm-up for the NAC-tracking to come. On

a happy and optimistic note, let me say, "If we can overcome, perhaps the Foundation can also."

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Sue Ammeter, president of the NFB of Washington and member of the NFB Executive Committee, was recently appointed by Governor-elect Dixy Lee Ray as one of a thirteen-person statewide commission to study what changes should be made to the Washington umbrella agency, DSHS. Since 1977 has been declared the "year of the commission," this appointment is very important to all of the blind in the State of Washington. She is the only handicapped person appointed to the commission.

The NFB of Washington had its first legislative dinner in December. Dr. Bob Mallas of Management Services Associates (and the Mallas Report) and John Taylor, Assistant Director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind, were the two speakers. There were 107 for dinner, which included many legislators and their spouses. The theme of the dinner was expressed at dessert when everyone was given a fortune cookie. Every fortune read, "1977 is the year of the commission."

Ed Foscoe has accepted a position as Coordinator of the Visually Impaired Program at Seattle Central Community College. He plans to convert an unsuccessful custodial program to a positive, successful program with the "can do" philosophy.

* * * * *

This report comes from Hazel Staley in North Carolina:

I think I may be about to have another problem with Central Piedmont Community

College. That's the school, you remember, that gave us such a hard time when David Alexander wanted to take the electronics course. (Now they brag about what a great job they have done with him.) This time it's the Human Services Department. The woman who is head of the child development part of it doesn't want to admit blind students. A blind woman here, Belvia Ange (a Federationist, by the way) somehow got into the class without Mrs. Petrowski (the head) realizing it. Belvia completed the course with no problems. In fact, she often had the whole group of children by herself, while the others just worked with one child. Belvia also has raised a fine teenage boy by herself. Still, Mrs. Petrowski says the blind students can't manage the children. Belvia called me about this a couple of days ago and I really haven't had a chance to do anything about it yet, but I will.

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Many in the Federation know Ethel (Tiny) Beedle, of Kansas City, Missouri. Shortly after the Convention last summer, Tiny Beedle was seriously injured in an automobile accident. Only recently has she regained consciousness. A special fund has been set up to help with the costs of a very prolonged hospitalization and many expenses still to come on the road to recovery. If you want to help with these expenses, make a check out to the Ethel (Tiny) Beedle Fund, and send it to the fund at this address: Box 17740, Kansas City, Missouri 64134.

* * * * *

Very recently [writes Al Evans, of the NFB of Greater Boston] my wife and I had an opportunity to attend the convention of another state NFB affiliate. Our fellow members ran a well-ordered, profitable

affair; and we enjoyed ourselves immensely. There was, however, one experience that gave us the shivers.

We listened to a speaker who was director of a private, NAC-accredited agency, and you may be assured that we got an insight that will live with us forever. When outlining his philosophy toward blindness he spoke of "the daily crisis of life" which "all" blind people experience. He continued with the use of the phrase "physical insult" of blindness. In medical terms "insult" is commonly used to express some sort of injury or disease, but to this audience the man's choice of words seemed poor.

Next he went on to relate what a "major handicap" like blindness could do to the "afflicted" individual. In case you do not know what is wrong with you if you are blind, I will tell you that this agency director believes you have been "shocked" by this physical insult which has left you "immobile" and otherwise unable to deal with the "daily crises of life."

On and on prattled this "expert" in the field of blindness; and as he talked, my wife leaned over and whispered to me, "Good Lord! According to him we're all dead, but don't know enough to give up the ghost!"

When the time came for questions from the floor, I rose to inquire if he thought that blindness could merely be a nuisance and not a tragedy. I received a lengthy answer which I should have expected. He considered that "in no sense could blindness merely be a nuisance," because, he said, if he were blind and needed to find his way out of the room in which we sat, he doubted if he could do it. Do you see the reasoning behind this man's thinking?

Because he believed he could not handle something, no one else similarly situated would be able to succeed either.

After we arrived home my wife and I could talk of little else but the director of the private agency. He literally frightened us; for his beliefs, ideas, and philosophies will be forced upon unsuspecting blind guys who seek some form of services and training from the agency he directs. These blind guys will be browbeaten, told what to do; and they will accept it for the most part. They will come out of this man's program thinking of themselves as he wishes them to think. Their spunk, dignity, and individuality will be crushed, and they will be deluded into believing that they learned something of value in the asylum-like atmosphere that our agency friend chooses to call "rehabilitation." The frightening truth is that there are many, many of our brothers and sisters across America who live this horror daily. The "daily crisis" in their lives is the program they must endure, as well as enduring those who administer such programs.

* * * * *

Frank Lugiano of Wilkes-Barre, past president of the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind, has been cited by President Ford for "exceptional service to others in the finest American tradition." Mr. Lugiano also received a plaque signed by the President. Four days later another award was bestowed on him by the White House this time by Roland L. Elliott, Director of Correspondence for the White House. The plaque signed by Elliott is a citation for "nearly one half century of promoting social and economic advancement for the blind." Lugiano is presently executive sec-

retary of the Luzerne County Federation of the Blind.

* * * * *

On November 5, 6, and 7 the NFB of New York State Students Division held its first annual seminar at the Treadway Inn in Binghamton, New York. Suzi Spigle, president of the Student Division, gave the meeting to order bright and early Saturday morning. Also present were Marc Maurer, president of the NFB Student Division, and Rita Chernow and Sterling France, president and first vice-president of the state affiliate. Speakers from a variety of government agencies were heard. As Suzi Spigle writes: "It was a year ago that our students division was formed. We all left the seminar with a sense of accomplishment on a fine first year completed. But most of all we left with renewed dedication for another year. There is much to be done and we are all working on the challenges which lie ahead. We are planning next year's seminar, with a pledge that every person here this year will bring at least one person with them next year."

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Esther Risch of 637 Watkins Street, Covington, Kentucky 40111, telephone (606) 491-9117, writes as follows: "On July 8, 1976, Thursday morning, I lost a green, medium-sized suitcase in Los Angeles en route from the limousine stop at the Hilton Hotel to the airport. There was a plane going to Las Vegas and several people just grabbed suitcases and ran. Mine could have easily gotten lost in the shuffle when the limousine stopped at the airport, since it didn't have any identification. Inside was a lot of print and Braille NFB literature, and

a razor." If anyone has information about this, write or call Esther Risch.

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A 19-percent increase in the amount of money Medicare recipients must pay to cover their portion of hospital or nursing home costs has been ordered by the Social Security Administration. The increase became effective January 1, and means that any person receiving Medicare will have to pay the first \$124 of his hospital bill for any stay of less than sixty days. The current charge is \$104. A recipient also has to pay 19 percent more for hospital stays of more than sixty days and for post-hospital admittances in skilled nursing homes. Thus in less than two years the portion beneficiaries must pay for short hospital stays has increased \$32 (a 13-percent jump became effective less than a year ago). The increase was necessary to keep pace with hospital costs that have been rising twice as fast as the cost of living. The Social Security Administration is required to follow a federal formula each year to determine the future cost of the Medicare program to beneficiaries.

On the other hand, the maximum amount that Social Security beneficiaries can earn without being penalized was increased January 1 to \$3,000 a year. The current earnings limit is \$2,760. Another automatic provision in the Social Security Act increased the wage base on which Social Security taxes are withheld, from \$15,300 to \$16,500. The Social Security tax rate remains unchanged.

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Volunteer Services for the Blind, 919 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107,

has announced that its recorded periodicals division has added *Smithsonian* magazine to its list of subscriptions available at \$12 each per year to the blind and physically handicapped, on cassettes to be returned by subscribers for reuse.

Other magazines that are read in full by the recorded periodicals division are: *Medical World News*, *Science News*, *Psychology Today*, *Scientific American*, and *Consumer Reports*. In addition, a number of subscriptions are offered consisting of selections of articles in various magazines in the field of science indicated: (1) Anthropology-Archaeology; (2) Broadcasting; (3) Datamation Plus (selections from *Datamation*, *Infosystems*, *Computer Decisions*, and *Computer World*); (4) General Science Monthly (readings from *A.D. Little Bulletin*, *Man and Molecules* produced by the American Chemical Society, and *Bell Lab Record*); (5) Nature and Ecology (readings from *American Forests*, *International Wildlife*, and others); (6) Oceanography (*Sea Frontiers*, *Sea Secrets*, and *Oceans*); (7) Popular Science-Popular Mechanics; (8) Professional Readings in Psychology (selected articles from *American Psychologist*, *APA Monitor*, *Behavior Today*, and *Psychological Bulletin*); (9) Radio Digest (ham radio); (10) Science Recorded (*Physics Today*, *Science*); and (11) Timely Topics (medicine, science, and other selections from *Time* magazine).

* * * * *

Almost 99,000 blind or severely disabled children or parents with little or no income and limited resources are getting almost \$10.5 million a month in federal Supplementary Security Income (SSI) payments. The average federal SSI payment to blind or disabled children is \$106 a month. Starting

at age 18, or age 21 if they are in school, blind or disabled people may be eligible for these income payments regardless of their parents' income or resources. Further information can be secured from any local Social Security office.

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Charles Brown, of the NFB of Virginia, writes as follows:

As many of you may recall, the "Magnolia Lyons Case" involves the refusal of an Alexandria doctor to permit Ms. Lyons into his waiting room accompanied by her dog guide. Ms. Lyons is a member of the Potomac Chapter of the NFB of Virginia.

After NFB complaints to the Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney and the Alexandria Medical Society brought less than satisfactory results, Ms. Lyons filed a civil suit for damages in the Virginia Circuit Court in Alexandria, alleging, among other things, that the doctor violated the Virginia White Cane Act. After a preliminary hearing, Judge Kent of the Circuit Court dismissed the case on the following two grounds: first, that the doctor's waiting room "is not a public facility or place" contemplated by

the White Cane Act; and second, that the doctor "had no duty to treat" Ms. Lyons.

Judge Kent's decision has, of course, been appealed to the Supreme Court of Virginia and I have prepared an "amicus curiae" (friend of the court) brief for the NFB in support of Ms. Lyons' appeal, which has been filed with the Virginia Supreme Court.

We are aware that judges are often reluctant to get into questions about how doctors run their practices. However, we are certainly hopeful that the Virginia Supreme Court will understand the overriding policy embodied in the White Cane Act—the full integration of the blind and the otherwise handicapped into the life of the commonwealth—and reverse Judge Kent's decision.

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Articles, changes of address, and any other correspondence dealing with the *Monitor* should be addressed as follows: *The Braille Monitor*, 218 Randolph Hotel Building, Fourth and Court Streets, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. The deadline for articles to be printed in the May issue is March 20. There will be no April issue. □

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